

## Leroy M. Burgess

Born: January 25, 1922

Died: November 13, 2014

Location: Charenton, Louisiana



Ibert's Mortuary

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## Tribute & Message From The Family



Funeral services celebrating the life of Leroy M. Burgess will be held Monday, November 17, 2014, at 11:00 AM at Little Pass Baptist Church in Charenton. He will be laid to rest in the Immaculate Conception Church Cemetery. Rev. Dr. Chris Holloway and Rev. Bobby Hodnett will conduct the services. A gathering of family and friends will be held Sunday at Ibert's Mortuary in Franklin from 4:00 PM until 8:00 PM. Visiting hours will resume Monday morning at Little Pass Baptist Church at 9:00 AM and continue until time of service.

Leroy was called home to his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Thursday, November 13, 2014, at the age of 92.

On January 27, 1942 he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, 2nd Marine Division, and faithfully served during WWII in the Battle of Guadalcanal, Tarawa (Betio), Saipan, and Tinian. He was awarded two purple hearts for injuries he received and was awarded the Silver Star for helping change the battle of Tarawa by locating and firing his 37mm anti-tank gun destroying the enemy's command bunker.

He was appointed as Chief of the Chitimacha Tribe in 1948 and served until 1950. He served as elected Chairman from 1971-1981, the longest of any Chairman to date. He was one of the writers of the Chitimacha Constitution. He worked hard to establish the Tribal government and quickly began improving Tribal members' lives by securing funding for Tribal programs such as housing, healthcare and education. He went before the United States Congress and successfully secured funding for the Chitimacha Tribal School.

Leroy spent his entire career working for various companies in the oilfield industry. He was one of the workers on the drilling rig that drilled the first "wildcat well" that was permitted in Federal waters, located in Ship Shoal, Block 32. At the age of 62, he retired from the oil industry as a superintendent with Kerr-McGee Oil Company. One of his passions in life was traveling, often telling stories of his trips to all of the fifty states and the places in the Pacific that he saw during his time at war.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and member of Little Pass Baptist Church. He had a strong faith in his Lord, reading his Bible daily and praying on his knees morning and night. He was a skilled fisherman and hunter and was an avid golfer who loved to play in tournaments at Broken Pines and at the Chitimacha Louisiana Open.

He will be fondly remembered and deeply missed by his family, friends, past co-workers and employees, fellow golfers and tribal members.

Survivors include five children, Mamie B. Soprano and her husband Michael, Willard Burgess and his wife Debbie, Clifford Burgess and his wife Marilyn, Ardith Soprano and her husband Anthony Jr., and Bradford Burgess; ten grandchildren; 19 great grandchildren; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Dora Mora Burgess; his parents, William and Mamie Vilcan Burgess; five siblings, Bert Burgess, Helen Marcotte, Senoila Proctor, Harvey Burgess, and Norwood Burgess; and three great grandchildren, Kate and Kollin Walden, and Alána Burgess.

Serving as pallbearers will be Mark Burgess, Steven Burgess, Joshua Burgess, Brent Burgess, Kurt Walden, and Ethan Leger. Honorary pallbearer will be Davy Darden.

Family and friends may view the obituary and express their condolences online by visiting [www.iberts.com](http://www.iberts.com).

Arrangements have been entrusted to Ibert's Mortuary, Inc., 1007 Main Street, Franklin, LA 70538, (337) 828-5426.